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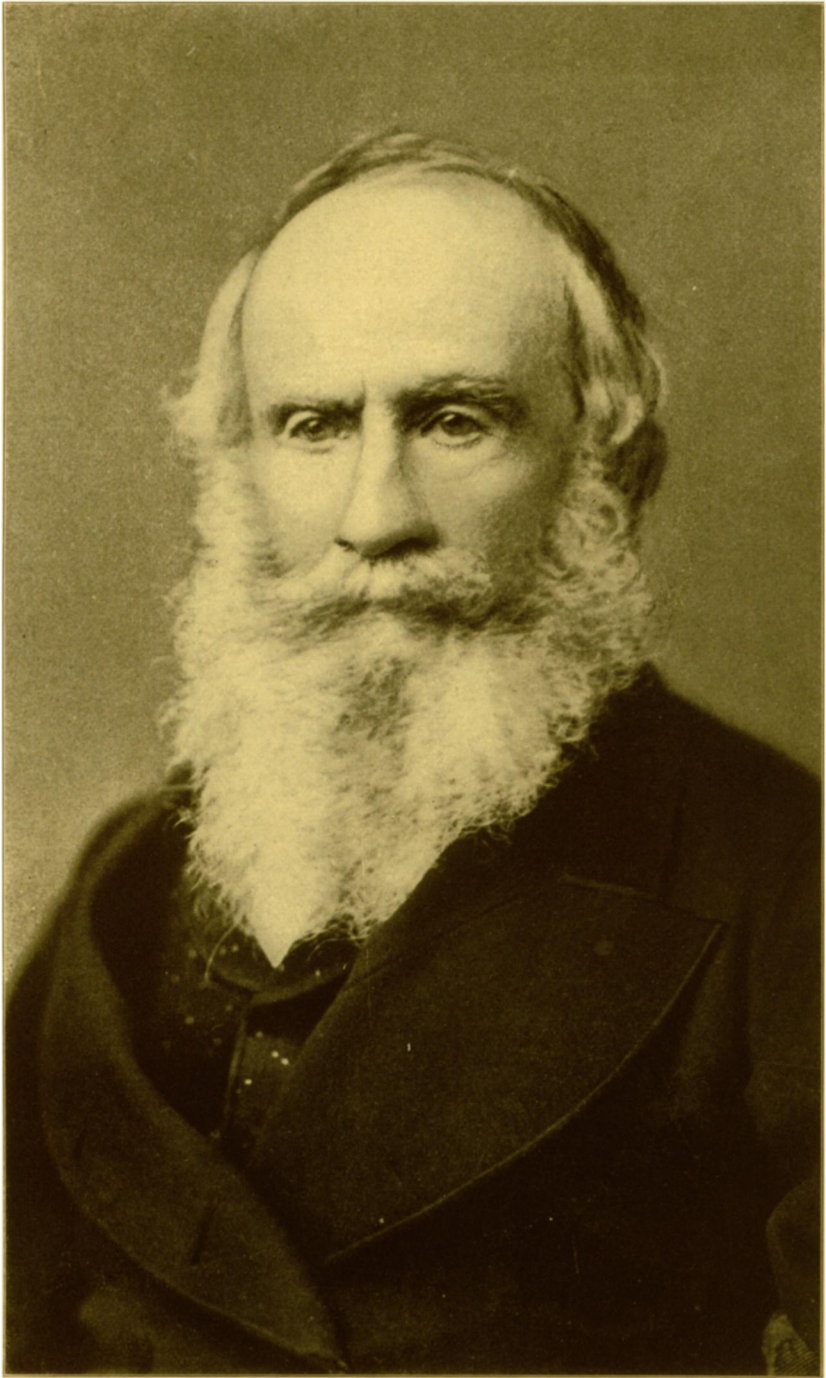
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## JOHN G. PALFREY

JOHN GORHAM PALFREY, the historian of New England, succeeded his friend, Alexander H. Everett, as editor of *THE REVIEW*, thereby keeping unbroken the tradition that a Harvard man hold this important position. He was graduated from that institution in 1815, at the age of nineteen, and three years later became the minister of the Brattle Street Church, Boston, just as his editorial predecessor and college instructor, Edward Everett, had done.

His best friend was Jared Sparks, and their friendship covered a long period: first, in the school-days at Exeter; later at Harvard, and continuing to the end of their lives; a rare companionship of mind and spirit. Their lives were closely paralleled—both were Unitarian ministers; both were editors; both distinguished themselves in historical work. In 1830 Dr. Palfrey was asked to occupy the chair of Sacred Literature at the Harvard Divinity School, a position for which his scholarship ably fitted him, and where he remained till 1839. Notwithstanding this claim upon his time, he accepted the editorship of *THE REVIEW* in 1836, which he held till 1843, and for these seven years worked earnestly to maintain the high reputation which the publication had won. While he was editor, and for many years after, he contributed frequently to *THE REVIEW*, and the variety of subjects he treated indicates the range of his learning and interests. He was equally at home in reviewing Miss Martineau's *Society in America* and Miss Sedgwick's *Tales* or Noyes's *Translations of the Hebrew Prophets*, and outlining the *Theory and Practice of the Federal Government*. There is a notable paper on "Congressional Eloquence," rich in its persuasive humor, which begins with this modern note: "There are few things in this age and country of reform (1841) more urgently demanding correction than the style of our Congressional debates. . . . There is generally a marked difference in the respect of *long-windedness*, between members from different portions of the country, though the constant force of example tends to assimilate them. Not that, in our opinion, there is much sense in what has been so often and so knowingly said about the contrasts of Southern frankness, fancifulness, and passion, and Northern reasonableness, correctness, and frost. But though there is no want of imagination or enthusiasm in the northern latitudes, nor of logic or far-sightedness in the southern, still the members from different parts naturally bring to their meeting more of the habits of their respective communities."

Dr. Palfrey was familiar with legislative oratory, for he was a member of the Massachusetts Legislature in 1842, and went to Congress from that State in 1847. His strong anti-slavery principles and his refusal to support Robert C. Winthrop, the Whig candidate for Speaker, cost him his re-election in 1848, and thereafter he devoted his time to the historical work of his native New England, which secured to him a lasting reputation. He died in Cambridge, April 26, 1881.



JOHN G. PALFREY  
THE EIGHTH EDITOR OF THE NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW,  
1836-1843.